CHARACTER COUNTS!SM

Task Force

Report to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Recommendations for Making Fairfax County
a Community Where Positive Character Counts

Executive Summary

The Board of Supervisors established the Character Counts Task Force (CCTF) in October of 1999. The CCTF was charged with developing a strategy for implementation of a program that would allow the County to be declared a CHARACTER COUNTS!$_{SM}$ Community. The Task Force was comprised of representatives from all nine magisterial districts, one at-large representative, and representatives from various county and community-based organizations.

To achieve its charge, the CCTF first implemented a survey of approximately 160 organizations (see appendix A). While response was limited, the CCTF was able to draw useful conclusions from the information gathered. CCTF found that while there were several programs for youth in addition to the many forms of character development initiatives in the schools, there were very few programs for adults. When asked "What gaps or needs do you see for strengthening character/ethics education in Fairfax County?" common responses were: the need for more information on existing programs, and the request for opportunities to network with other programs and organizations offering character development.

The second step was to research character development initiatives in other parts of the country (see appendix E). The CCTF hoped to identify common practices in successful programs. Common practices found in this research included a broad approach to character development with a scope beyond just the school setting and establishment of a full-time ongoing board dedicated to character development in the community.

Based on the survey and research, the CCTF recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

- Embrace their role as advocate and facilitator for encouraging character development
- Establish an ongoing citizen-based advisory committee to work with full-time dedicated support staff to represent and promote the community's contributions toward this effort and address the goals in Chapter Five
- Identify and make available information on best practices through the establishment of a newsletter, or some other form of communication, to all segments of the community to assist those organizations in the community seeking to establish character/ethics programs
- Establish guidelines for identifying appropriate character development/recognition programs that are seeking endorsement or funding from Fairfax County
- Continue Fairfax County's membership in the national CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition and fulfill the associated commitments as outlined in Chapter One

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History of the Character Counts Task Force

Establishing the Task Force

On October 11, 1999, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion authorizing a CHARACTER COUNTS!$_{SM}$ *Task Force (CCTF) "made up of representatives of each magisterial district and Countywide community-based organizations." The CCTF was asked to "develop a strategy for implementation of a program to allow the County to be declared a CHARACTER COUNTS! Community." The Board of Supervisors officially established the CHARACTER COUNTS! Task Force on December 6, 1999.

Becoming a CHARACTER COUNTS! Community

Officially becoming a CHARACTER COUNTS! Community required that the County become a member of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition. Accordingly, the County submitted its membership application and paid its first annual fee of $750 on February 1, 2000. The CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition members make the following ongoing commitments:

- To integrate character education into new and existing programs and to encourage young people and their parents to adopt and model the Six Pillars of Character

- To participate in national and local CHARACTER COUNTS! public-awareness campaigns, such as CHARACTER COUNTS! Week

- To cooperate in developing and using context- and age-appropriate methods and materials.

The CCTF Holds Its First Meeting

The CCTF held its first meeting on May 2, 2000. This meeting was to serve as an introduction of the membership and an introduction to the concept of CHARACTER COUNTS!. A presentation was made by the local CHARACTER COUNTS! staff, providing background information on the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition at both the national and local level. In addition, a representative from Fairfax County Public Schools gave an overview of the wide variety of comprehensive character education initiatives available in the schools at the kindergarten through twelfth grade level. The spectrum of programs ranged from those at the national level to locally developed initiatives.

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*CHARACTER COUNTS!$_{SM}$ is a service media of the Character Counts! Coalition – a program of the Josephson Institute of Ethics© 1995. It is understood that wherever CHARACTER COUNTS! Appears in this document in all capital letters with an exclamation point, it is the service media.

During the discussion that ensued, it became clear that there are many highly regarded character development programs available and that a variety of those initiatives are currently in use in Fairfax County. Members of the CCTF expressed concern that adopting and promoting one character/ethics program to the exclusion of the others would not be the best approach in a county as large and diverse as Fairfax. Therefore, the CCTF informed the Board of Supervisors via the County Executive that barring a requirement to do otherwise, it would broaden its scope to be as inclusive as possible.

As the Board did not choose to restrict the CCTF, its redefined purpose was to propose recommendations to make Fairfax County a community where positive character counts in a multitude of approaches, including but not limited to the nationally recognized CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition.

The next chapter presents the Task Force's Mission and Vision Statements. Chapter 3 is a summary of character initiatives taking place in Fairfax County as determined from the county-wide survey. Chapter 4 includes a summary of selected character development initiatives in place outside of Virginia. The Task Force's Goals and Strategies are presented in Chapter 5. Our Summary and recommendations are included in Chapter 6. This is followed by a list of Task Force members and a series of appendices that include the survey, a list of organizations to whom the survey was sent, a summary of the survey results, an overview of character development efforts in public and private schools, a discussion of several other character initiatives throughout the County, and a list of relevant websites.

Vision and Mission

The Vision Work Group

The role of the Vision Work Group was to develop vision and mission statements and lead the process for editing and finalizing statements that would be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for adoption. The task force members felt that these two statements would provide the Board a clear picture of its role in making Fairfax County a community where positive character counts.

Crafting vision and mission statements led to a thorough discussion about the role of government regarding character, ethics, values and morality. The Task Force agreed that though a democratic government cannot legislate morality, good character is important in forming a strong community and developing responsible citizens. The Task Force recommends that the role of the Board of Supervisors should be that of an advocate and facilitator for encouraging character development in all aspects of community life in Fairfax County. Therefore the Task Force proposes the following vision and mission statements:

Proposed Fairfax County Board of Supervisors CHARACTER COUNTS! Vision Statement:

> *Fairfax County . . . a community in which good character is valued, nurtured, and celebrated.*

Proposed Fairfax County Board of Supervisors CHARACTER COUNTS! Mission Statement:

> *To serve as a catalyst for building a community-wide culture of civil and moral conduct by promoting positive character and respect for others and by advocating the importance of individuals, families, faith communities, schools, government, businesses, and civic organizations in achieving this mission*

Survey of Current Practices in Fairfax County

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Task Force developed and implemented a survey of what selected community based organizations and County agencies were doing in the area of character/ethics programs. A survey questionnaire was designed by the survey work group and approved by the Task Force (see appendix A). The distribution list included contacts submitted by task force members and businesses, government agencies, and non-profit members of the Partnership for Youth. In all, approximately 160 organizations, agencies, and businesses were contacted either by phone or through a mailed survey questionnaire (see appendix B for list of organizations). Approximately 20 percent of those contacted replied to the survey. A summary of responses is shown in Appendix C.

The results of the survey showed that there are many different character/ethics programs active in the community. Most of the organizations chose to design their own programs rather than use existing nationally recognized programs. There was a limited response from the business community. There are many character/ethics program opportunities for young people. The survey provided no information indicating that what exists for the adult community extends beyond basic training in procurement ethics, sexual harassment, and risk management. Some businesses in the County are contributing either staff time or funding to public school character/ethics programs.

Despite the limited scope of the survey, the results confirmed initial impressions that a variety of character education, development, or recognition programs, both formal and informal, are in use in the County, but that most of the programs are aimed at youth. Survey results were examined as they applied to five segments of the County: schools, business and civic organizations, faith-based community, youth-serving organizations, and government organizations, recognizing that some overlap among the groupings occurred. A brief summary of these results follows.

Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools is committed to the development and support of comprehensive character education programs in all of its schools and centers in keeping with the state mandate on character education. Individual schools are charged with teaching basic character traits such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Fairfax County Public Schools embrace a wide variety of character education programs, including CHARACTER COUNTS!, Community of Caring, and the Eleven Principles of Character Education. Additionally, schools have elected to develop unique approaches to character-building that reflect student demographics as well as education needs, incorporating them in such a way as to complement the Standards of Learning. Similar variety was found in private schools included in the survey.

Many of the survey forms contained specific suggestions for strengthening character education in the schools, including the following:

- More involvement of the entire community

- Emphasis at all grade levels to reinforce what is taught

- Funding available to individual schools for structured programs, materials, and training

- An expanded structure for cooperation and coordination among schools to share resources and experiences

A more extensive review of the programs used by schools can be found in Appendix D.

Businesses and Civic Organizations

For the most part, businesses did not respond to the survey; therefore, it is difficult to draw many conclusions. Based on information provided by the schools and the Partnership for Youth, there are many mentoring programs in which businesses participate with the public schools, and some encourage and reward community service. Although character development may be a by-product, it is not the main thrust of these relationships.

Most civic organizations have community service as their mandate and purpose for being. A few, such as the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition of Reston, have character development as their focus. There are several civic groups, including the Chambers of Commerce and the Rotary Clubs, that participate in "ethics day" programs with their local high schools.

Faith-Based Organizations

Five surveys were received from faith-based organizations. While it is difficult to draw any broad summary from this very limited sample, several general characteristics are evident:

- Specific well-defined values and ethical characteristics are delineated, and materials for teaching them are provided through the affiliated religious community

- Activities are self-funded and focused on organization members and the surrounding community

- Lay volunteers provide most of the character education for children and youth with support from staff religious leaders

- Education programs are mostly focused on children and youth, but adult programs are provided

Respondents were generally not familiar with efforts being made on a County-wide basis to develop character/ethics programs. They suggested that a newsletter or some other medium could be beneficial to improve awareness and efforts.

Youth Organizations

Eight surveys were returned from organizations primarily targeted toward youth. Most of the respondents indicated some form of character development or education in their program. About half of the respondents indicated they used a formal program, either designed by their organization or a national program. In general, the sports organizations did not use formal programs, but included sportsmanship, fair play and teamwork in their programs. Other generalizations which can be drawn from the small sample include:

- Character values which are promoted by the programs include respect, caring, citizenship, cooperation, honesty, fairness, responsibility, integrity and service

- Partnerships with other organizations to groups to help in the delivery of their character development programs

- The target audiences generally include elementary, middle, and high school-aged youth, but rarely include preschool aged children

- Lack of parental involvement and shortage of volunteers were cited as problems faced by these organizations

Two respondents stated that an increased awareness of other effective programs and an opportunity to network with other organizations would be beneficial in helping to strengthen character education programs throughout Fairfax County.

Government Organizations

Six surveys were received from government agencies operating in Fairfax County. Of the six, two offered no character education programs, one offered a program they designed for the adults served by their organization (Inmates at Adult Detention), and the other three offered formal character education programs for youth. Of the three respondents offering formal programs, two were using the CHARACTER COUNTS! curriculum. All of the youth programs that responded are serving middle and high school youth. The respondents cited two areas that need to be addressed: the need to track outcomes and measure program success, and the need to be informed about other programs available for the youth they serve.

Survey Conclusions

Despite the limited nature of this survey, the CCTF does not believe that it would be a beneficial or an effective use of resources to conduct a more in-depth survey. However, many survey respondents identified a need for increased information and opportunities to learn about and network with others. Any available resources should be focused on broad-based communication activities designed to increase awareness of and synergy in character development initiatives in Fairfax County.

Initiatives Outside Of Virginia

Summary of Initiatives Outside of Virginia

A representative review of several character development initiatives in place in communities outside of Virginia can be found in Appendix E. Most of the programs cited are community-based initiatives. Those communities which have put into place significant character development initiatives that go beyond the school and/or educational efforts have also established standing committees that continue to promote, monitor, and adjust character development efforts throughout their communities. A portion of each standing committee's time appears to be spent in fund raising, through either applying for federal/state/private grants, seeking private contributions, and/or sponsoring fund-raising events. These standing committees are composed of members from various sectors of the local community and many meet on a regular basis.

Goals and Strategies

The CCTF identified goals and strategies for future efforts in Fairfax County in order to support the recommendations.

Goal 1. Involve youth in developing and promoting positive character initiatives

Strategies:

- Involve student government organizations within schools in developing and promoting positive character traits and recognize those schools with strong effective programs
- Support efforts throughout the community to implement and expand youth - to - youth mentoring by recognizing those efforts on a regular basis
- Encourage youth sports organizations to promote positive character behavior through an easily implemented training program
- Sponsor character focused events for youth on a regular basis and recognize all youth who participate in these efforts

Goal 2. Encourage and promote character development for adults

Strategies:

- Integrate character initiatives into County and FCPS staff development programs
- Share resources and strategies to assist businesses and civic organizations in implementing their own character development programs
- Expand character development in all parent education programs
- Develop, publicize, and support a code of ethics for all elected and appointed Fairfax County officials, staff, and community appointees
- Include all facets of the community, particularly those residents who might not otherwise be involved in character development programs

Goals 3. Involve the entire community in establishing, expanding, and promoting character development

Strategies:

- Engage the business community in participating in character development initiatives through partnering with schools and community coalitions
- Encourage character development as part of mentoring programs
- Develop a recognition program for businesses that implements character development programs

- Sponsor a Countywide forum for schools, businesses, chambers of commerce, government and other community organizations to discuss character and ethics

Goal 4: Recognize, on a regular basis, good character role models

Strategies:

- Encourage local organizations, county agencies, and schools to bring forward youth and adults who should be recognized as good role models
- Use existing public information vehicles to routinely recognize good character role models
- Establish a Board of Supervisor's annual character recognition ceremony to be held during CHARACTER COUNTS! Week

Summary and Recommendations

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Task Force identified five basic recommendations that would further the County's efforts to be a community where positive character is valued nurtured and celebrated. The Task Force recommends that the Board of Supervisors develop a structure to sustain, monitor and evaluate character development initiatives by:

- Embracing their role as advocate and facilitator for encouraging character development

- Establishing a newly appointed, citizen-based, advisory committee to work with full-time, dedicated support staff to represent the community's contribution toward this effort and address the goals in Chapter 5

- Identifying and making available information on best practices through the establishment of a newsletter or some other form of communication, to all segments of the community, to assist those organizations in the community seeking to establish character/ethics programs

- Establishing guidelines for identifying appropriate character development/recognition programs that are seeking endorsement or funding from Fairfax County

- Continuing Fairfax County's membership in the national CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition and fulfilling the associated commitments as outline in Chapter 1

Character Counts Task Force Members

District Representatives

- Tim Bowen, Springfield District
- Brad Center, Lee District
- Ellen Field, Dranesville District
- William Gormly, At-Large
- Wes Kendrick, Braddock District
- Jacqueline Manger, Mason District
- James Raney, Providence District
- Greta Rice, Sully District
- Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon District
- Laura Thomas, Hunter Mill District

Community Representatives

- Diane Bayless, Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital
- Matt Budz, National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America
- Mark Emery, Task Force Chairman, Partnership for Youth
- Gary Plaag, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce
- Patricia Junkin, Fairfax County Athletic Council
- Todd Pangman, Faith Communities in Action
- Chuck Veatch, CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition
- Louis Zone, Rotary Club of Vienna

Fairfax County Staff

- Diane Eckert, Fairfax County Public Schools: Safe and Drug-Free Youth Section: School/ Community Coalition
- Carolyn Gecan, Fairfax County Public School (Teaching Staff)
- Stephen Spero, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
- Henry Ticknor, Fairfax County Public Schools (Administrative Staff)
- Deborah Deutsch, Community and Recreation Services (Lead Staff)
- Julie Knight, Community and Recreation Services (Support Staff)
- Padia Grant, Community and Recreations Services (Support Staff)
- Patricia D. Franckewitz, Acting Director, Community and Recreation Services

Appendix

The Survey

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has formed a "Character Counts!" Task Force to develop recommendations on strategies for strengthening character education or development, or recognition of character modeling, within Fairfax County. The Task Force is conducting a survey of organizations that appear to be involved in character/ethics education, development, or recognition. The purpose of this survey is to identify existing programs providing these services and possible opportunities to expand these services. The Task Force will use the survey results in its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Surveys can be completed by phone or in writing and then mailed or faxed. Completed surveys should be mailed to: Fairfax County Department of Community & Recreation Services, Attn: CCTF Survey – Debbie Deutsch, 12011 Government Center Parkway, 10th floor, Fairfax, VA 22035-1115. You can fax your completed survey to the Character Counts! Task Force at the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services: 703-222-9792.

Character/Ethics Programs Survey

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ FAX _____ Website:_____

Contact Person: _____E-mail:_____

Is your organization involved in any form of character/ethics education, development or recognition of character modeling? ____ YES ____ NO
If YES, please answer the following questions as they apply to these character/ethics education, development or recognition programs. If NO, go to question #16.

1. Does your organization participate in any local, state, regional or national character/ethics program?
❏ CHARACTER COUNTS! ❏ Community of Caring ❏ Second Step ❏ 4th and 5th R's
❏ Responsive Classroom ❏ None ❏ Other:_____

2. If your organization has such a program, how do you promote it?

3. Are there specific character values/traits (such as honesty, respect, responsibility, etc.) which your program emphasizes and, if so, please list those values/traits.

4. Please briefly describe how the character/ethics program is presented and how participants have an opportunity to learn/utilize character traits/values.

5. Who provides or delivers the character/ethics program (teachers, volunteers, business partners, staff, etc.)?

6. Does your organization offer training for those involved in delivery of character/ethics programs? If so, please describe:

7. Does your organization partner with other organizations or businesses to provide character/ethics education or development or recognition of character modeling? If yes, please specify name and any contact information.

8. What is the approximate number of Fairfax County participants per year in your character/ethics program: _____

9. Please indicate the general geographic coverage in Fairfax County for your program:

   ❑ Countywide   ❑ Specific geographic area (please specify): _____

10. Please indicate target populations:
    ❑ Preschool   ❑ Elementary school   ❑ Middle school   ❑ High school   ❑ Adults

11. How is the character/ethics program funded?

12. Are bilingual services offered? Specify languages:
    ❑ Spanish   ❑ Vietnamese   ❑ Korean   ❑ Farsi   ❑ Other (please specify): _____

13. What gaps or needs do you see for strengthening character/ethics education in Fairfax County?

14. What suggestions do you have for strategies to address those needs?

15. Are you aware of other organizations involved in character education or development or recognition of character modeling that perhaps we should contact?

Form completed by _____Date _____

Comments:

List of Organizations

Accotink Academy
Accotink Pre-School
Adult Softball Council
Akoben Male Mentoring Program
Alcohol & Drug Youth Services
Alcohol and Drug Services-Resiliency Unit
Alternative House
American Management Systems, Inc
American Red Cross, National Capital Area
Annandale Boys and Girls Clubs
Bailey's Crossroads Athletic Association
Baseball Advisory Council
Before & After School, YMCA
Big Brothers/ Sisters
Black Women United for Action
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington D.C.
Boys Scouts of America - National Capitol Area
Braddock Road Youth Club
Breastfeeding Consultants of Northern Virginia
Brown Academy
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Arlington
Center for Multicultural Human Services
Center for Multicultural Services
Chesapeake Ability School
Chesapeake Bagel Bakery
Clark-Winchcole Foundation
Coalition for Community Involvement
Coalition of Hispanic Professionals
College Partnership Program
Community and Recreation Services, Zone Teen Center
Community Mediation Services, Inc.
Community Ministries of Northern VA
Community Services Board
CrisisLink
Department of Family Services
Dominion Hospital
Dynamic Options
Edison Community Coalition for Safe & Drug-Free Youth
Encircling Families/Project Word
FACETS
Fair Oaks Mall
Fairfax Branch YMCA
Fairfax County Office of the Sheriff
Fairfax County Police Department

Fairfax Kinder Care Learning Center
Fairfax Little League
Fairfax Mentoring Partnership
Fairfax/Falls church CSB-Prevention/Girl Power
Families, Inc.
Falls Church Culmore UMC
First Baptist Church of Vienna
First Virginia Bank
Franconia Coalition
Franconia United Methodist Church
Girl Scout Council of the Nations Capitol
Girls Fast Pitch Softball Council
Good Shepherd United Methodist Church
Heatherwood Community
Hispanic Committee of Northern Virginia
Hispanic Committee of Virginia
Hispanics Against Child Abuse & Neglect, Inc.
Holy Spirit Catholic Church
HOPE in Northern Virginia
Human Growth Foundation, Inc.
Immanuel United Methodist Church
Information Management Systems
INOVA Health Care Systems
Institute for Youth Development
Interstate Van Lines
Jewish Community Center of N. VA
Joy of Sports Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Korean Coalition
Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Inc.
Lee District Association of Civic Organizations
Living Free Health Services
Marshall Pyramid Community Coalition
Merritt Academy
Messiah Methodist Church
Mobil Foundation
Mulford School
Northern Virginia Community Foundation
Naomi Project
Northern Virginia Girls Softball Association
Northern Virginia Girls Softball League
Northern Virginia Aids Ministry
Northern Virginia Family Services
NOVA Family Services
OAR of Fairfax County, Inc.
Office for Children
Old Firehouse Teen Center
Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources
PANDAA
Pender UMC (S.O.S.) Ministries
Pender United Methodist Church
Phillips Programs Children & Families
Phillips School for Continuing Education

Pioneer Baseball
Prison Fellowship
Resident in Marriage & Family Therapy
Residential Youth Services
Resource Mothers, YMCA
Reston CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition
Reston Montessori School
Route One Corridor Housing, Inc.
Saratoga Center
Sheriff's Office
Shiloh Project
SLM Pregnancy Help Center
Soccer Advisory Council
SOS Program - Vienna Site
Springfield Little league
Springfield Mall
Springfield Youth Club
St. Anthony Catholic Church
St. Bernadette's Church
St. Mary of Sorrows Church
St. Michael Catholic Church
St. Stephens United Methodist Church
Temple B'nai Shalom
The Congressional Schools of Virginia
The Ethos Foundation
The Korean Community Service Center
The Shiloh Project
The Women's Center of Vienna
United Community Ministries
United Methodist Family Services
US Army Garrison, Fort. Belvior
US Army, DPCA
Vecinos Unidos
Volunteer Center of Fairfax County, Inc.
Volunteer Emergency Families for Children
Wachovia Bank
Wakefield Recreation Center, The Zone Teen Center
Washington Gas
West Group
Westgate Child Center
Westminister School
Women's Club of Falls Church GFWC
World Assembly of Muslim Youth
YMCA
Youth Basketball Council
Youth for Tomorrow
YWCA

Character Survey Results Summary

Is your organization involved in any form of character/ethics education, development or recognition of character modeling?

>   Yes – 25
>
>   No - 8

1. **Does your organization participate in any local, state of regional or national character/ethics education, development or recognition program?**

    CHARACTER COUNTS! - 5

    Other - 13

    None - 7

2. **If your organization has such a program, how do you promote it?**

    Many organizations incorporate their character/ethics education into their program curriculum. Others work with various public private and non-profit organizations to offer programs and information to the community.

3. **Are there specific character values/traits (such as honesty, respect, responsibility, etc.) which your program emphasizes and, if so, please list those values/traits.**

    Character traits concentrations varied but generally addressed the same traits as the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars (honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.)

4. **Please briefly describe how the character/ethics program is presented and how participants have an opportunity to learn/utilize character traits/values.**

    Most organizations offer training on their character traits. The character/ethics program is often covered in existing classroom/meeting settings and is a part of the overall curriculum. Many organizations require community service projects or some type of experiential learning to augment the formal training participants receive. Other organizations train adults to develop character programs for the participants with whom they work.

5. **Who provides or delivers the character/ethics program (teachers, volunteers, business partners, staff, etc.)**

   Teachers – 11, Volunteers – 12, Business Partners – 1, Staff – 10, Parents – 2

6. **Does your organization offer training for those involved in delivery of character/ethics programs? If so, please describe.**

   Seventeen of the respondents offer training. Methods of training include staff in-service training or contracting with private organizations such as CHARACTER COUNTS! to provide training. A few organizations developed character/ethic curriculum to be used by other agencies.

7. **Does your organization partner with other organizations or businesses to provide character/ethics education or development or recognition of character modeling? If yes, please specify name and any contact information.**

   Ten of the respondents partner with businesses. The partnerships included private corporations, public organizations, and community groups.

8. **What is the approximate number of Fairfax County participants per year in your program?**

   The total number of county residents served by the survey respondents was 19,621 with the largest single program serving 13,000, the smallest was 40, with an average of 577 per program.

9. **Please indicate the general geographic coverage in Fairfax County for your program.**

   Eleven programs reported that they served all of Fairfax County. Fourteen programs reported that they on served specific areas of the County. There was at least one program in each magisterial district of the County.

10. **Please indicate target population:**

    Preschool – 7, Elementary School – 14, Middle School – 17, High School – 17, Adults – 8

11. **How is the character/ethics program funded?**

    Funding sources included grants from public and private donors, tuition or fees raised from charges to participants, moneys raised from product sales and/or the organizations budget.

12. **Are bilingual services offered? Specify languages.**

    Spanish – 7, Vietnamese – 2, Korean – 1

    Other languages offered were sign language, Braille, French and Latin.

13. What gaps or needs do you see for strengthening character/ethics education in Fairfax County?

Some of the gaps identified were the need for parent involvement, the need for character programs to be used consistently in all schools, the need for information on what character programs are available and where, the need for more volunteers, and the need to track outcomes.

14. What suggestions do you have for strategies to address those needs?

Strategies cited included sharing resources and information, mandating parent participation, working together to develop best practices, hire staff in the County designated to promote and teach the CHARACTER COUNTS! Curriculum, and encourage that character programs be used in public and private settings.

15. Are you aware of other organizations involved in character education, development, or recognition of character modeling?

The organizations that were identified as having character education programs were: The Jewish Community Center, Babe Ruth, The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Langston Hughes Intermediate School, Juvenile Detention center, Sunrise House (Alcohol and Drug Services), Crossroads (Alcohol and Drug services), Immanuel Bible Church Youth Services, and Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR WITHIN FAIRFAX COUNTY

Overview

The informal survey undertaken by the CHARACTER COUNTS! Task Force identified several character development and recognition programs in public and private schools in Fairfax County. Citizens of all ages participate, from infants and children in preschools, to children and youth in elementary, middle, and high schools, to parents and other adults in the community at large. Some schools adopt national character programs, while others develop their own programs. Also, some schools partner with colleges and universities, businesses, parents, and community organizations to support their programs, while others support their programs entirely with their own resources.

In the public education sector, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) embraces a wide variety of character education programs. Many FCPS School Community Coalitions have been working with their pyramid schools on character education programs. The College Partnership Program, a partnership among middle and high schools, colleges and universities, businesses, parents, students, and community organizations to support academic success and college enrollment, also incorporates a character education/development program.

In the private education sector, the Phillips School for Contemporary Education embraces the national CHARACTER COUNTS! program. The Rachel O. Merritt Academy embraces the national "Eleven Principles of Character Education" program developed by the Character Education Partnership. The Congressional Schools of Virginia implements its own "Honor Code" program for character development and recognition. Only these three schools in the private education sector were surveyed by the CHARACTER COUNTS! Task Force.

Fairfax County Public Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools have been committed to the development and support of comprehensive character education programs in all of its schools and centers for over 15 years. Many of these initiatives grew out of local, school-based efforts, and involved the development of ethics classes, leadership classes, and whole-school, fully-integrated character development programs, to cite just a few. These character development efforts occurred at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In 1998, the School Board established an Administrator for Character Education position to coordinate character development efforts across all schools. The School Board has adopted resolutions in support of character education and character development in its schools for the past six years. In compliance with the Code of Virginia, the Fairfax County School Board has given its support to the establishment of character education programs that instill in students civic virtues and personal character traits that will improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high

character. Individual schools are charged with teaching basic character traits such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Each aspect of character education is taught in a variety of ways--through direct instruction, as well as, modeling, illustration, and participation in such a way as to complement *The Standards of Learning*.

Fairfax County Public Schools embraces a wide variety of character education programs. Within the schools are programs that are modeled on the national CHARACTER COUNTS! model, the Community of Caring model, and the Eleven Principles of Character Education developed by the Character Education Partnership. Additionally, schools have elected to develop unique approaches to character education that reflect student demographics as well as education needs. Many of the secondary schools work with such community organizations as the Chambers of Commerce and other civic organizations to sponsor ethics days and service learning opportunities. The provisions of the Fairfax County Public Schools character education program are intended to educate students in core civic values and virtues that are common to the diverse social, cultural, and religious groups represented in our schools.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) School Community Coalitions

Many FCPS school community coalitions have been instrumental in working with their pyramid schools to see that a character education program is implemented. Other school community coalitions have supported character education programs that are in place in the schools. School community coalitions have provided volunteers and funds for training, the development of the curriculum, the purchase of print materials and videos, and facilitators to speak at character education programs. Specific school community coalition initiatives include the following:

> Annandale Community Coalition endorses character education as its main school-based initiative. The coalition provides funds to enhance the character education program specific to each school, including Thomas Lickona's "Educating with Character," the 'Community of Caring," "Second Step," "class meetings," and "CHARACTER COUNTS!"

> Robinson Community Coalition prides itself in being a "Community of Caring" community and calls its program "Reach In to Reach Out." This philosophy is reinforced each year at its annual retreat.

> Sully Community Coalition encompassing both Chantilly and Centreville pyramids actively promotes and supports character development based on the six keys to good character. Some of the pyramid schools use "CHARACTER COUNTS!" while others use "Core Virtues" or "Rich in Character" curricula.

> Falls Church Community Coalition has an innovative initiative called "Character Education through Books and Music."

> Greater Herndon Coalition enthusiastically supports CHARACTER COUNTS! in all of its schools with stipends for CHARACTER COUNTS! Coordinators. They developed a series of cable television shows highlighting school character education activities and worked with the town and police to display banners and posters throughout Herndon.

Safe Community Coalition comprising the McLean and Langley pyramids early on endorsed and provided training by Thomas Lickona. They have sponsored teen summits, middle school forums, and parent programs to discuss issues related to character.

Reston Community Coalition is in a CHARACTER COUNTS! community and supports these programs in the schools. The coalition, CHARACTER COUNTS!, and Reston Community Center jointly recognize student mediators on their Martin Luther King Day celebration. Reston middle school students are interviewing residents on issues of citizenship and service to the community.

Marshall, Fairfax, Stuart, Woodson, Springfield, and Vienna-Madison Coalitions have supported or co-sponsored with local civic organizations an Ethics Day at their respective high schools. For example, the Marshall Pyramid Community Coalition sponsors Ethics Day, an all-day program with separate modules addressing a variety of ethical issues. Marshall High School is in partnership with the business firm Booz Allen & Hamilton that funds almost the entire cost of this program. The program is promoted through in-house school announcements and news media. It is conducted by volunteers from the community, business partners, and other businesses.

Edison Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth provides pyramid-wide support for CHARACTER COUNTS! in Edison High School and the other schools and centers in the Edison Pyramid. A Character Education Committee was formed for each school. Full-day "CHARACTER COUNTS! " training was provided for up to five teachers, administrators, and staff from each school. The trained individuals provided in-school training for other personnel. This program was funded by the Coalition with a matching grant from the CHARACTER COUNTS! of Northern Virginia Foundation.

Lake Braddock Coalition purchased for all its elementary schools an animated classic video series on heroes to help teachers integrate character education into the Standards of Learning curriculum.

Springfield Community Coalition has participated in a Community of Caring/Character Education Partnership grant in all of its schools for the last three years. One of its four goals is to promote the basic tenets of citizenship.

West Springfield Coalition has participated in a Community of Caring/Character Education Partnership grant in all of its schools for the past two years.

Mount Vernon Youth and Community Coalition supports character education programs in all of its schools and a Community of Caring grant in one of its schools.

Woodson Community Coalition sponsored all-day retreats for the junior class on character building.

College Partnership Program

The College Partnership Program provides academic and motivational support for selected students to develop the academic and personal skills required for college entrance. It nurtures positive attitudes toward academic achievement and emphasizes the character values of honesty, integrity, leadership, and scholarship. These values are incorporated into

the curriculum for middle and high school students. The primary goal is to increase the number of students, particularly minority students, who enroll in college. With the assistance of the public schools system, college and university partners, business partners, parents, and the community, an average of 98 percent of graduating College Partnership Program students have enrolled in college since 1989 when the program began.

The above is not intended to be an exhaustive list of character education and character development programs occurring throughout Fairfax County Public Schools. Many schools, at all levels, have incorporated all, or part, of the above efforts and/or have developed their own initiative to meet the needs of their community.

Phillips School for Contemporary Education

The Phillips School for Contemporary Education is a private, nonprofit school serving children in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area who manifest one or more of the following disabilities: behavioral problems, emotional difficulties, autism, learning disabilities, and mental retardation. The school participates in the national "CHARACTER COUNTS!" program. It conducts a number of activities throughout the year, including displaying the Six Pillars in all classrooms and on bulletin boards. The school's CHARACTER COUNTS! Committee provides in-service training and library materials for teachers to use for incorporating character education into the curriculum. Lessons and daily activities must incorporate the pillar being emphasized currently. Teachers wear CHARACTER COUNTS! pins and nominate students who showed strength in the current pillar. These students are recognized over the public address system. The program is funded out of the school's budget, with United Way funds used to purchase materials.

Rachel O. Merritt Academy

The Rachel O. Merritt Academy is a private, nonprofit school (preschool and K-8) serving students primarily in Northern Virginia. The school participates in the national Character Education Partnership and recently won the coveted National School of Character Award. The school promotes its character education program through an annual forum, visits to other schools, service projects, and presentations at various conferences (e.g., National Conference on Youth). Two different values are emphasized during each month, or 24 values during the year: caring, patience, love, honesty, kindness, forgiveness, courage, tolerance, helpfulness, perseverance, politeness, neatness, citizenship, loyalty, cooperation, initiative, respect, attentiveness, sharing, self-control, thankfulness, responsibility, joyfulness, and wisdom. This culture of values is integrated into every subject area and activity. It is a part of the hiring process for teachers and staff, and a part of the report card for students. It is the only form of discipline used in the school. It is reinforced through parental involvement and role modeling. Parents sign off on the "Legacy of Values" and pledge to uphold and model these values. Bilingual services are offered in Spanish and French. The program is funded through tuition, plus the $2,000 grant resulting from the National School of Character Award.

Congressional Schools of Virginia

The Congressional Schools of Virginia is a private, nonprofit school serving students in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. It provides character or ethics education, development,

and recognition through its Honor Code. The Honor Code emphasizes honesty and respect for oneself, others, and others' property. At the start of each school year, instruction is given on the meaning of the Honor Code. Counseling and continual emphasis on the meaning of the Honor Code are provided throughout the school year. The teachers, principal, head of the school, counselors, and school nurse are all involved in emphasizing the Honor Code. All staff members receive one-day (six hours) of workshop training. The students range in age from six-weeks old (preschool) through eighth grade (middle school). Bilingual services are offered in French from kindergarten through eighth grade, and Spanish from fifth grade through eighth grade. The program is funded through tuition.

Initiatives Outside of Virginia

This section summarizes some of the best practices for character development in communities around the United States. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list and its primary focus is on the community involvement aspect of character development. Much of this information has been obtained from the CHARACTER COUNTS!(CC!) and Character Education Partnership websites.

CALIFORNIA

Tulare County

- For the fifth year, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Visalia Times Delta newspaper sponsored the "Kid of Character" awards. In the past four years over 1,000 students in Tulare County have been recognized and honored through this program. The Visalia Times Delta printed nomination forms, and the Tulare County Office of Education sent nomination forms to the schools.
- For the third consecutive year, the Pixley Area Churches group devoted morning services to the Six Pillars of Character. On Sunday evening, all participating churches convened to recognize a senior member of each church who models the Six Pillars.
- The Friday Night Live Program uses Character Counts! to reach out to 750,000 students with an anti-drug, -alcohol, -tobacco and -gang message.
- The Tulare County Character Counts! program sponsors weekly features on a local TV station recognizing the area's "kids of character."

Lancaster

- The Antelope Valley Athletic Club's (AVAC) Summer Basketball League held its playoffs and championship during CC! Week. AVAC rewarded good character in the games with two character awards, one for the boys and one for the girls. League coaches and parents nominated kids from each team.

Los Angeles County

- The Venice Community Housing Corp. is helping students at Mark Twain Middle School beautify their community with a Six Pillar mural, creatively using a Los Angeles County grant normally dedicated to graffiti abatement.
- In the summer of 2000, the city of Santa Clarita sponsored the third annual Parent University Conference and Workshops for over 250. The one-day program provided parents with ideas to raise a child with good character and was run by the city's department of parks, recreation, and community service. Marriage and family specialists

discussed such topics as the impact of television on children, the long-term effects of bullying, "time-outs" for preschoolers, raising emotionally-intelligent children who can communicate their feelings, and using good character in daily life.

Orange County

- Four high school students have designed and developed an ethics, values and character website as a resource for their peers - www.youthethicsusa.org.
- Students at several high schools in Mission Viejo and Worthington, Ohio, linked up via video conference in November 1999 to discuss such topics as getting parents and teachers to be more accepting of character development and moving character education from the classroom to the community.

MARYLAND

Gaithersburg

- Over 40 schools participated in the city's fifth annual Character Counts! Poster Contest and Reception. City also held an essay contest for elementary, middle and high school students on the subject of "Adult Heroes in Our Community."
- The business community has started sponsoring various character education projects, and the religious community agreed to stress character development using the language of shared values. National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week was celebrated with a city-wide "graffiti paint-out" and a poster contest at the mall.
- Local businesses are recruited to help (e.g., restaurants have offered contest awards).
- The monthly PTA newsletter features a "Character Counts! Corner" to keep parents abreast of activities and to provide tips for character building at home.
- The Gaithersburg Mayor and City Council have incorporated CHARACTER COUNTS! into the city's mission statement and vision. City leaders are committed to teaching ethics education to young people, citizens and business leaders.

Frederick County

- Teachers nominate students in each of Frederick County's "feeder systems" (a high school, middle and elementary school within a district) for exhibiting exemplary character. These students are recognized at an event in their district. All students throughout the county who are nominated are invited with their parents to a celebration picnic at the end of the year. Corporate sponsors provide food, T-shirts and other incentives for students. More than 1,000 people attend the picnic each year.
- At Ballenger Creek Elementary the school has organized and hosted two Walk/Run fundraisers for the needy. The Frederick Keys Baseball organization hosted two nights at the ball games where students participating in CHARACTER COUNTS! programs were recognized in front of the crowd prior to the game. The Keys also distributed free tickets to Frederick County students who are peer mediators.

MISSOURI

St Louis

- Developed two in-service: The Sanford N. McDonnell Leadership Academy for Character Education and the NationsBank/Southwestern Bell Leadership Academy for Character Education.
- NationsBank and Southwestern Bell joined forces to fund the academy now underway at Webster University with major grants of $50,000 each.
- Helped teams of principals (K-12) build and strengthen character education in their individual schools and communities.
- Assisted with program development and studying ways it can incorporate character education into its preparation programs for teachers and administrators.
- Trained principals to develop and initiate school-wide character education programs.
- Increased involvement to get as many schools as possible involved in character education.
- Collaborated with universities to prepare future educators to value and use character education.

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque

- The Middle School Athletics program within Albuquerque Public School has as one of its centerpieces the Six Pillars of Character. Through the efforts of the coaches, teachers and APS administrators, these are constantly stressed. One example of this is that children who do not act "responsibly" in doing their homework and maintaining good grades are not permitted to participate.
- Leadership Council consisting of approximately 30 community leaders and representing many community "constituencies" formed in 1994 under the joint sponsorship of Senator Pete Domenici and Mayor Martin Chavez. The Council has organized itself into both standing and ad hoc work groups to develop and implement plans to broaden character efforts in the community. In late 1995, it became a 501(C)3 corporation to facilitate fund-raising activities.
- A federal grant is channeled through the State Department of Education in support of the goals as specified in the grant which are primarily aimed at school aged children. From a programmatic point of view, there is virtually no administrative overhead that must be defrayed.

TENNESSEE

In 1997, the governor mandated that all Tennessee schools teach character education. By February 1998, each of the state's nine regional human resource agencies had received a $20,000 grant to run CHARACTER COUNTS! (CC!) programs.

The Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) provided the model by which CC! has spread throughout the state: first in the local human resource agency, then in schools, then in the community at large. Some of UCHRA's highlights:

- CC! has been introduced to all agency employees and into 68 service programs and all 450 UCHRA employees have participated in two- and three-day CC! workshops.
- Young people learn of good character through the Summer Youth Employment and Training program administered by UCHRA and in the In-School Career Training program.
- The UCHRA's Community Intervention Service programs teach youth who have been sentenced by local general sessions judges about making choices and about consequences as part of a CC! program.
- Recipients of public assistance learn the basics of ethical decision making through the "Fresh Start" program taught by UCHRA staff.
- Mentors for parents on public assistance partner with CC! trainers to incorporate ethical decision making into home life.
- Local judges, civic and business leaders and government officials have delivered "Character Minutes" on local and regional radio and television spots.

Humphreys County

The Humphreys County Alliance for a Drug-Free Tennessee and local law-enforcement groups have led efforts to bring CC! to this part of the state.

- Website (www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/9804), including general information, a photo album and a monthly calendar.
- E-mail group (charactercounts@egroups.com) to facilitate communication about CC! activities and character education.
- Character information and articles in each issue of the News-Democrat and Shopper's Guide newspapers.
- 4-H essays on the Six Pillars in newspapers.
- Bumper sticker contest coordinated by Humphreys County 4-H.
- Local business professionals visited schools to speak about ethical decision making.
- CC! flag flown at the Dixie League Field

Knox County

- Attorneys who work with the high schools' Moot Court program received training. They are using CC! To teach ethical decision making in these juvenile justice programs.
- Juvenile court officers, probation officers and many police officers also have received CC! training, and a curriculum has been written to begin a CC! program for first offenders through the juvenile court system.

VIRGINIA

Northern Virginia

- All 40,000 Manassas residents received an insert about CC! Week with their utility bills.
- High school seniors in Fairfax County attend one-day ethics seminars where volunteers from the business community discuss character themes with the students. The program has expanded to five high schools.
- In Reston, leaders have used the local Autumnfest celebration to dispense character education information to the community. They also have plans for training sessions open to all residents and a chamber of commerce-sponsored seminar to teach ethical decision making to teenagers.

WASHINGTON

Enumclaw

Enumclaw High School

- Developed and implemented a "Learning and Employability Profile" (LEP) program.
- Steering committee composed of staff, students, parents, school board, and business/community members was formed to develop implementation strategies for the LEP program. Teachers began to integrate the LEP traits into classroom instruction - and most uniquely - to grade students on their ability to emulate the LEP characteristics. The LEP scores now account for 20 percent of all academic grades and are accompanied on report cards by a written comment from each teacher.
- Administrators now offer an "Alternative Discipline Assignment" by which students can choose to interview a local employer about the value of LEP skills and to write a one-page essay instead of attending detention or Saturday School.
- The LEP model was presented to the local Rotary Club, and the Chamber of Commerce, distributed information through the Chamber's newsletter, and made several efforts to encourage the business community to request students' transcripts, attendance records, and LEP scores as part of the hiring process.
- Employers were quick to appreciate Enumclaw students' added attention to workplace readiness. Many employers signed on to the initiative, and soon staff from surrounding schools began to incorporate the LEP skills into their school agenda to meet the increasing requests from Enumclaw employers interested in students' LEP abilities.

SUMMARY

It appears that those communities which have put into place significant character development initiatives -- initiatives that go beyond the school and/or educational efforts -- have also established a "permanent" standing committee that continues to promote, monitor, and adjust character development efforts throughout the community. A portion of this committee's time appears to be spent in fund raising, either through federal/state/private grants, private (business) contributions, and sponsoring fund raising events (carnivals, bazaars, etc.). These standing committees are composed of members from all sectors of the local community; many establish ad hoc subcommittees for particular tasks and meet on a regular basis, some monthly.

Websites

Several web sites of interest that detail efforts on building good character/good ethical behavior :

Institute for Global Ethics
(www.globalethics.org)

Ethics Resource Center
(www.ethics.org)

Center for Ethical Business Cultures
(www.cebcglobal.org)

Albuquerque CHARACTER COUNTS!, INC.
http://www.abqcharactercounts.org/

Character Education Partnership
http:/www.character.org

The Character Education Pages
http://cuip.uchicago.edu/~cac/chared/

Dr. Gough's Character Matters
http://www.geocities.com/~professorgough/

Community of Caring
http://www.communityofcaring.org/

North Carolina Character Education Partnership
http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/nccep/cumberland/action.html

Center for Advancement of Ethics and Character
http://www.bu.edu/education/caec/

Character Counts; What Are People Doing
http://www.charactercounts.org/album/albumtoc.htm

Character Counts Coalition Members List
http://www.charactercounts.org/members.htm

Gaithersburg, Maryland; Character Counts Home Page
http://www.ci.gaithersburg.md.us/poi/default.asp?POI_ID=114&TOC=112;114;

Center for Ethical Business Cultures
http://www.cebcglobal.org/